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Mr M Smith  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Smith

### **Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 4 and 5 October 2011 to look at work in citizenship.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of six lessons and the student council meeting.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is satisfactory.

### **Achievement in citizenship**

Achievement in citizenship is satisfactory.

- In some instances, for example through geography and history lessons, students make connections to relevant citizenship issues such as international aid, poverty, trade and conflict.
- Students engaged in various college and community-based youth forums acquire the necessary skills and confidence to effectively represent their views and those of their peers.
- While students largely enjoy citizenship-related lessons, a large minority struggle with concepts and detach themselves from the issues being considered. Higher-attaining students are well engaged and able to draw on their general knowledge to inform their understanding of citizenship education.

- Students are insufficiently aware of the progress they are making within the subject.

### **Quality of teaching in citizenship**

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- A team of experienced teachers from a range of subjects contributes well to citizenship education through the discrete personal, social and health education (PSHE)/citizenship programme or their specialist area.
- The most effective teaching is planned to extend students' understanding of key citizenship issues and topics such as debt, child labour, international cooperation and democracy. The best lessons are interactive and evoke strong responses and opinions from students.
- Teachers' lack of citizenship-specific experience has a bearing on their confidence and limits the variety of approaches and strategies adopted. Most have insufficient grounding in the subject's key concepts and processes and do not fully recognise the virtue and value of using topical issues to consolidate citizenship learning in lessons.
- The student council and community-focused activities involving students are well facilitated by college staff and by representatives from external groups. Such facilitation helps students to sharpen and present their particular case.

### **Quality of the curriculum in citizenship**

The quality of the curriculum in citizenship is satisfactory.

- Periodic assemblies address topical issues well and broaden students' knowledge. Increasingly, extended opportunities are being used to enhance the curriculum, for example an exchange with a London school which promotes students' understanding of diversity and culture. A recently introduced ASDAN award at Key Stage 5 encompasses citizenship elements.
- Students' engagement in various forums strengthens well the 'informed and responsible action' element of the curriculum.
- The citizenship curriculum is primarily delivered in a cross-curricular manner. The model, however, does not take enough account of the subject's key concepts and processes, nor does it fully accommodate its underpinning body of knowledge.
- A recent citizenship curriculum audit enabled the college to record which aspects of the citizenship programme of study are covered across subjects. It represents a good start but fails to consider the quality of the curriculum and where improvements need to be made.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship is good.

- Senior managers have, over the last two years, attended to a range of improvement issues across the college. Attention is now being given to the PSHE/citizenship programme. The evaluation of citizenship is honest and largely accurate.
- The two PSHE/citizenship subject leaders are skilled, enthusiastic and objective. They are well placed to bring about further improvement.
- The college plays a distinct and recognised role in the local community. In doing so it enables students to participate in valuable citizenship-related activities.
- Insufficient use is made of external subject support and networks to broaden the skills and confidence of teachers or access relevant teaching and learning resources.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- reviewing the citizenship curriculum with a view to improving its coherence
- considering the professional development needs of subject leaders and teachers and implementing a programme accordingly.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop citizenship in the school.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Tony Gallagher**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**